

believe. In the end, tradition and repression come together in the representational forms (some new and some old) of the Revolution. Merrick and Ragan lay out a rich and complex picture of the Revolution that is, of course, not really an end at all.

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Teaching Sex: The Shaping of Adolescence in the 20th Century. By JEFFREY P. MORAN. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000. Pp. 304. \$27.95 (cloth).

In *Teaching Sex: The Shaping of Adolescence in the 20th Century*, Jeffrey Moran offers a well-researched, concise, and clearly written account of the American struggle to develop policies to teach sex and sexuality, combat sexual diseases, and reform sexual deviancy while at the same time transmitting responsible family values to future generations. Historically, this struggle between religious moralists and secular social service professionals has played itself out as a battle to control the sexual morals and behaviors of the nation's youth. Like the resolution of many other important social issues, as Moran's story illuminates, what evolved was a one-size-fits-all, "sex-less" educational curriculum designed to please everyone. In the end this particular labor to control the nation's youth produced a compromised "Instrumentalist Approach" that allowed educators—without teaching sex—to warn school-age children about the evils of premarital sex and sexual diseases in the context of responsible family values. Since the topic is far from resolved in modern American politics, Moran's story provides an historical framework for this particular struggle for the American soul.

In eight chapters, Moran explicates the cyclic struggle of sex education proponents, disease-training advocates, and family-life educators to define American adolescence and establish a national sex education policy. Chapter 1, "The Invention of the Sexual Adolescent," begins in 1904 with Clark University psychologist G. Stanley Hall's attempt to research and define adolescence. Hall's Victorian beliefs (he personally referred to genitals as the "dirty place") combined with a progressive ideology to set the stage for numerous attempts to reform young men's insistent sexual urges, protect virtuous women, and allow people to understand the role of sexuality in character development. At the same time, the problem of adolescent sexuality was exacerbated by a changing American landscape, characterized by overcrowded cities, culturally diverse immigrants, crime, and disease, that provided illicit temptations to young people, who were pushed into co-educational public schools just when the age of puberty was declining and many young people were delaying marriage. As a Social Darwinist, Hall

envisioned a coalition of educators (in the new high schools and colleges), religious leaders, and family and social science professionals who would promote chastity and reform savage urban youth.

In chapter 2, "Regulating Adolescent Appetites," we learn that the coalition failed. Rates of prostitution, promiscuity, divorce, child abandonment and abuse, and venereal disease increased, while immigrant populations proliferated, and the white birthrate declined. President Theodore Roosevelt responded by warning the nation of the possibility of "race suicide." In an effort to change the situation, worried reformers attacked the Victorian "conspiracy of silence" and turned to eugenics, birth control, and sex education. This spawned a new cadre of Progressive Era professionals (social hygienists and sex educators) who advocated sex education to break the silence and teach adolescents to "control natural urges" and make "intelligent choices." Turning over parental responsibility to professionals was not an easy sell, and many Americans with traditional religious and family values resisted these new ideas.

The story reaches one of its turning points during World War I, when middle-class American soldiers were exposed to lower-class moral values and less restrictive, European ideas of free sex. Chapter 3, "The Revolt of Youth," tells of the attempts to defeat the idea that war was a "moral holiday" and to establish national educational programs in the military to combat venereal disease and keep it from spreading throughout America. Despite the united front among promoters of sex/disease education, these programs failed to control promiscuous sexual behavior; VD increased as postwar, middle-class youth became more sexually active.

The next two chapters describe the loss of sex education programs to disease education models. Chapter 4, "Putting Sex in the Schools," begins with the story of Maurice A. Bigelow, of Columbia College and the American Social Hygiene Association, who jumped at the opportunity to deepen the involvement of public schools in sex education. He hoped to create a "larger sex education" program that would implement an integrated curriculum designed to emancipate sex education from disease training. However, sex educators failed to transfer support for the anti-venereal-disease crusade into their own program, prompting Moran to reflect on how "every reform movement suffers from a gulf between the elite level of theory and the actual implementation of its programs" (p. 99). Chapter 5, "Domesticating Sex," reveals how the disease model strengthened its position in national policy during World War II but was overwhelmed by older models at the end of the war, becoming embedded in the Cold War "consensus" attitudes that addressed life adjustment and family values.

For progressives and emerging liberals this was a temporary setback. In chapter 6, "Fighting the Sexual Revolution," and chapter 7, "The Triumph of Sexual Liberalism?" Moran shows how the sexual revolution of the 1960s and 1970s provided another opportunity to develop a national sex education program. At that time many in the nation accepted a new

sexual openness, or “New Morality,” supported by consumerism; people openly read *Playboy* magazine and watched *Peyton Place* on television. Liberal Americans supported such organizations as Planned Parenthood and Dr. Mary Steichen Calderone’s SIECUS (Sex Information and Education Council of the United States), which helped reduce the number of obscenity laws and advocated new liberal, co-educational, and age-graduated sex education programs. While many conservative Americans viewed the sexual revolution as a part of the left-wing counterculture and attacked the new sex programs as anti-American, the AIDS epidemic provided additional reasons to establish new sex education curricula. But in yet another ill-fated move, liberals compromised and settled upon promoting a curriculum built on the social reform models of World Wars I and II.

In chapter 8, “The Myth of Reform,” Moran addresses the real thesis of his book and persuasively argues why sex education failed in the twentieth century. First, schools have not been as powerful as liberals hoped; no one has proved that any sex education program has changed people’s behavior, whether in school or later in life. Second, school programs have not allowed students to spend enough instructional time on the subject. Third, there is little agreement on the sexual and family values that schools should teach. In the new American pluralism, white, middle-class, Protestant value systems may no longer represent the majority of Americans. And the premises behind the need for sex education in the schools are often shaky. Statistical data can be ambiguous; the phrase “children having children,” for example, which has carried so much political weight for advocates of sex education in schools, has a new meaning when one realizes that 60 percent of unwed teenage mothers are eighteen or nineteen years old.

Moran could have clarified this book by providing an overall introduction and by changing the subtitle; *The Shaping of Adolescence in the 20th Century* is excessively broad and is misleading. He could also have enhanced this book by including the views of historians of education, which would have set sex education into the complex culture of the school. Nonetheless, he has produced a powerful account. This is a book relevant to the modern-day drive to control American youth and their sexuality. The contemporary argument about sex education, like the one Moran describes historically, is over solutions—with religious teachings, parental rights, family values, scientific arguments, and professional expertise all being called into play, often in mutually antagonistic ways. These competing value systems have been able to find common ground in just a few periods, during World War I and II and the current AIDS epidemic, when the threat of sexually transmitted diseases enabled people with opposing views to address the need for a national sex education policy. This is an important story that deserves to be confidently and forcefully told.

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